



# James River Reach

The James River Advisory Council Newsletter

Volume 7 No. 1 Fall 2007



## James River Advisory Council

### Vision Statement

*A united community supporting and promoting the James River as a shared resource and enhancing its health, heritage, economic vitality and recreational value.*

### Mission Statement

*To promote and protect the James River as one of Central Virginia's greatest assets and one of America's most unique rivers, the James River Advisory Council serves as a forum for the diverse interests along the River and communicates with public officials and the public regarding issues, challenges, opportunities, threats, and possibilities facing the river, its resources, and adjoining communities. The Council sponsors and facilitates activities and promotes public policy that focuses on the river, celebrates its beauty, and improves our use and appreciation of this extraordinary resource.*

## Calendar of events

### October 2007 - Early 2008

**Oct. 2** Parade of Lights Committee Meeting  
10-11AM, Henrico Recreation and Parks

**Oct. 17** Regional Cleanup Brainstorm Session  
9:30-11:30AM, Chesterfield Administration Bldg

**Oct. 17** James River Days Committee Meeting  
1-2PM, DGIF

**Oct. 25** JRAC Fall Quarterly Meeting  
8:30-11AM, RRPDC at Stony Point

**Nov. 6** Parade of Lights Committee Meeting  
10-11AM, James River Park

**Dec. 4** Parade of Lights Committee Meeting  
10-11AM, James River Park

**Dec. 8** 15th Annual JRAC Parade of Lights  
Dusk, Points along the James River (see article)

**Dec. 14** Submission Deadline  
James River Days 2008

**Jan. 25** JRAC Winter Quarterly Meeting  
8:30AM



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# Regional River Cleanup

## Nets More Than **600** Bags of Litter

By Dave Goode, JRAC Member

Nearly 800 volunteers filled 639 garbage bags with litter and recyclable materials June 9 during the James River Advisory Council's James River Regional Cleanup.

The annual event draws hundreds of volunteers to the river each June. This year's event, which included sites as far west as Appomattox County and as far east as Charles City County, tackled more than 70 miles of the James. Shorebound volunteers and boaters did their share to clean up the river.

"Volunteer numbers were down a bit from the past couple of cleanups but still well within expected levels," JRAC Executive Director Kimberly Conley said.

One of last year's sites did not participate, while one new site experienced limited participation. Last year's cleanup drew a record 864 volunteers.

"It usually takes a year or two to build up participation levels at a new site," Conley said.

While overall participation dipped, two sites experienced significant increases in participation from last year. Those sites in Cumberland and Powhatan counties saw participation increase by a whopping 225 percent.

"We are extremely pleased with this year's turnout and expect the James River Regional Cleanup to continue to grow in the future," Conley said. "Everyone involved should be proud that they have helped make the James a better place."

Of the bags of litter collected, 405 were basic trash and 234 bags were filled with litter, including aluminum, plastic, glass, paper and cardboard that will be recycled.

The river cleanup focuses on collecting litter from the shorelines as well as from the water, and boaters have continued to show increased support. This year's event included 17 powerboats, 30 canoes, three kayaks and two rafts. Boaters are a key element because they can access floating litter or litter that is on shorelines not easily accessible by foot.

As in past years, the cleanup produced myriad items, including everything from the expected litter items, such as bottles, cans and Styrofoam containers, to some unusual finds, including a plastic Pillsbury Doughboy figurine and an unopened fortune cookie.

The fortune inside the cookie stated, "A job well done."



# 2007

## State of the James River

- Summary -

### Half Way to a Healthy River

Currently, the health of the James River receives an overall grade of C with an average score of 52 percent. This means that we are about half way to the goals for returning the James River to full health.

Within the overall score is a mix of good news and bad news. While bald eagles and rockfish score 100 percent based on their remarkable population rebounds over the past several decades, shad, oysters and brook trout are at fractions of their previous levels. We have achieved strong success in reducing pollution from waste water discharges, but we are lagging behind in sediment and erosion control compliance.

While the James River ecosystem is complex and dynamic, there is an overriding issue that is the greatest challenge to further improvement of its health – polluted runoff: the pollution carried from the land during rain events into our stream creeks and eventually the James River. Nearly all of the James River's fish and wildlife are affected by this runoff, and it is the most widespread cause of habitat degradation. Polluted runoff is the greatest source of sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that collectively cause varied and widespread problems throughout the river ecosystem.

### No Time to Lose

The future of the James River is at a tipping point. Efforts over the past three decades have begun to reverse the river's decline, and the Commonwealth of Virginia now has detailed clean-up plans that specify the actions needed to restore the river to full health. However, polluted runoff from across the watershed continues to have widespread devastating impacts on the river. Moreover, at the current pace of devel-

opment, Virginia will developed as much land in the next 40 years as it did in its first 400 years.

These increased pressures and demands placed on the James River threaten to undermine what progress we have made in protecting and restoring this shared treasure. Without swift and decisive action now to stem the polluted runoff entering the river, the mighty James River will once again fall into decline.

- J.R.A.

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### River District Oct. 2007 Events

**Grower's Market** on Thursdays and Saturdays through October 27, from 8:30AM-2PM

**Sunday Open Heirloom Market** through October 28, from 8:30AM-2PM

17th St. Farmer's Market, Free Admission



## Member Focus ...

# Jennifer 'Jen' Sidleck

In July, Jennifer Sidleck was hired as the Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront's executive director. Jen brings lots of enthusiasm and energy to Chesterfield County and has great aspirations for moving forward the Friends mission on behalf of the Appomattox and James Rivers.

Jen's educational background is founded in science with a BS in Environmental Science from Juniata College located in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania and a MS in Environmental Pollution Control with an emphasis in Watershed Stewardship from Penn State University. She previously was employed by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay where she was a program assistant and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) where she coordinated outreach efforts with localities and watershed organizations. Many JRAC members may know Jen from her DCR work to reinvigorate the Middle James Roundtable.

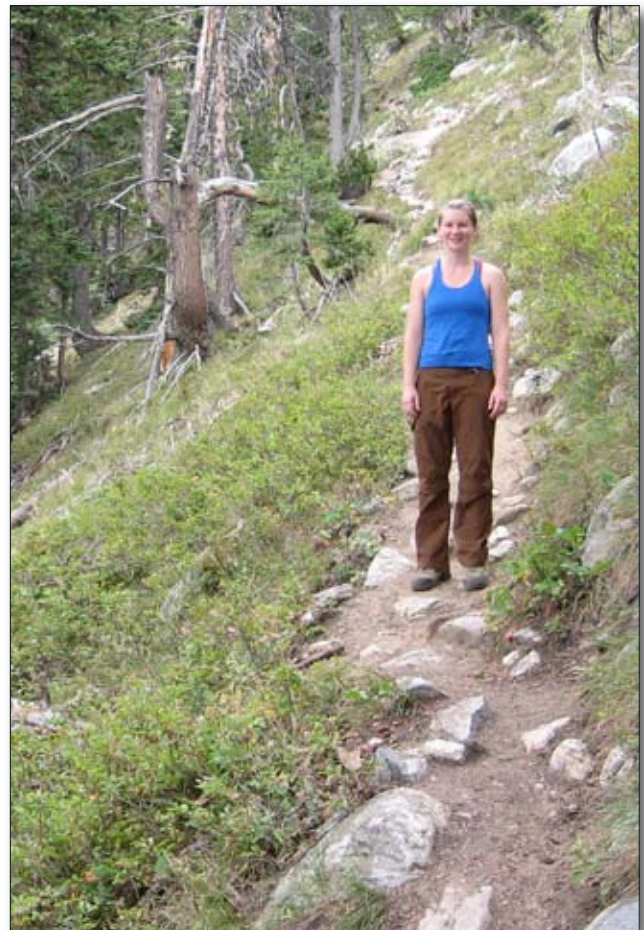
A native of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, Jen chose to initiate her work in the natural resource field in Virginia because her educational training peaked an interest in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Her studies in Pennsylvania focused on mountainous areas, unlike Virginia where there is more coastal influence. Working in one locality is the key aspect that made Jen want to be the executive director for the Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront. She is impressed with the way the organization was founded by Chesterfield as a result of the Riverfront Plan that was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 1997. She looks forward to being involved in the ongoing public-private partnerships on behalf of Friends.

Jen says she will be working to "find more effective ways to engage citizens in understanding the complexity of environmental issues." She plans to develop local opportunities for citizens and thereby increase outreach for the rivers in the community. Ideas of how she and the Friends board of directors may do this include continuing greenways work that connects the rivers and the community, increasing opportunities for restoration activities like BayScaping, training citizens for rain barrel installation, leveraging partnerships to include homeowner associations and engaging a broader spectrum of Chesterfield's residents.

Outside of her work for Friends, Jen loves to travel to beautiful spots. She recently traveled to Jackson Hole, Wyoming where she hiked and toured Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park. She enjoys running for exercise and nurtures her creativity by making wheel-thrown pottery.

Closer to home, Jen will be looking to meet JRAC members and citizens at the December Parade of Lights. She is excited about involving volunteers and reaching out to residents and visitors at this event on the bluff at Henricus and Dutch Gap. Stop by the Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront outreach booth to say hello and give Jen Sidleck a hearty welcome.

-Janit Llewellyn



Jen Sidleck hiking in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

# Chesapeake Watershed Forum

**“Sharing Strategies to Manage Growth and Protect Our Waters”**

**October 12-14, 2007**

**National Conservation Training Center**

**Shepherdstown, West Virginia**

Registration is now open for the 2nd annual Chesapeake Watershed Forum on October 12-14, 2007, at The National Conservation Training Center, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Forum fees are \$150.00 per person before September 30, 2007. (\$175.00 per person after October 1, 2007.) The fee includes the workshop sessions and field trips, a private room with bath, and hearty buffet style meals that begin with Friday lunch and end with lunch on Sunday.

The Forum is limited to 300 attendees, so please register early! Online registration is not available, please mail or fax your registration using the information on the registration form found at [www.AllianceChesbay.org/forum.cfm](http://www.AllianceChesbay.org/forum.cfm) <<http://www.AllianceChesbay.org/forum.cfm>>

Arrival and check-in at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum begins on Friday, October 12 at 10am, with lunch served from noon-1pm. The first sessions begin on Friday afternoon. The keynote presentation will occur on Saturday evening. Field trips and free time will be offered on Saturday afternoon. Closing sessions on Sunday will cap this second annual Chesapeake Watershed Forum. A special “Meet the Funders Happy Hour” for the Forum attendees will take place on Saturday Evening.

Some scholarships will be available for attending the Chesapeake Watershed Forum, please see the Forum webpage and registration form for information about applying for a scholarship.

Questions about the Forum can be sent to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay staff:

Deborah Rudy at: 717-737-8622; [drudy@acb-online.org](mailto:drudy@acb-online.org)  
or Lou Etgen at 410-377-6270; [letgen@acb-online.org](mailto:letgen@acb-online.org)

## 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan

The Virginia Outdoors Plan is the Commonwealth’s official conservation, outdoor recreation, and open space plan. It serves as a guide to all levels of government and the private sector in meeting Virginia’s land conservation, outdoor recreation, and open space needs. The 2007 edition of the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) will be the 9th produced in Virginia. Preparation of the 2007 VOP included over 80 public meetings held across the Commonwealth. In addition, over 50 agencies and organizations have partnered with

the Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide input and review of this guidance document. The three themes in the 2007 VOP include green infrastructure, land conservation and outdoor recreation. These themes and the plan’s recommendations support Governor Kaine’s land conservation goal of 400,000 acres by 2010. Publication and distribution of the plan is scheduled for late fall 2007. The Virginia Outdoors Plan may be viewed at: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/vop.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml).

## **‘Reflections on the James’ JRAC’s Annual Boat Parade is Dec. 8**

**By Dave Goode, JRAC Member**

The James River Advisory Council’s 15th Annual James River Parade of Lights will be held Saturday, Dec. 8, at dusk.

The theme for this year’s boat parade between Richmond and Henricus Historical Park in Chesterfield County is “Reflections on the James.”

Last year, more than 20 decorated boats made the parade run, and efforts already are under way to attract even more boater participation this year.

Participating boaters converge on the river at Richmond for a grand illumination, then head downriver.

Several designated public viewing sites along the river make it easy for spectators from throughout the region to enjoy the parade. There are sites in Richmond and Chesterfield and Henrico counties, and several sites include additional entertainment. Many riverfront property owners also converge on the shoreline with family and friends to view the parade, which has become a cherished holiday tradition.

The boats are judged in several categories, and awards are given out at an after-parade celebration for the boaters.

For more information about viewing times and locations, or to register as a James River Parade of Lights participating boater, visit the JRAC Web site at [www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com](http://www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com), or call the Parade of Lights information line at (804) 717-6681.

### **Interested in being a Sponsor?**

**James River Parade of Lights**  
Dec. 8, 2008

**James River Days**  
April-September 2008

**James River Regional Cleanup**  
June 14, 2008

**Call 748-1567 or email [conleyk@chesterfield.gov](mailto:conleyk@chesterfield.gov)**

## **Virginia Requires Mandatory Boating Education**

**By George Bruner, JRAC Member**

The 2007 Virginia General Assembly passed HB 1627 that will require all persons operating a boat with a ten horsepower or greater motor to have successfully completed an approved boating education course. The final details of the Bill will become effective on July 1, 2008. Age requirements will be phased in over the next seven years. It starts with requiring those less than 21 years old to have a certificate by July 2009 and those less than 36 years by July, 2010. On July 2016 all operators must have met the education requirements. Any person may operate a motorboat (except personal water craft) if under the direct supervision of a person who meets the educational requirements.

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) is finalizing the requirements for approval by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources prior to the start of the next session. Currently youth fourteen and fifteen years of age operating a personal water craft are required to have proof of successfully completing an approved boating education course. The DGIF will establish an approved list of courses that may include certain on-line courses. Generally approved courses are offered in one eight-hour, two four-hour, or four two-hour sessions. They cover legal requirements, safety equipment, hull design, and safe operations. DGIF, the United States Power Squadrons (including Richmond Sail and Power Squadron), and Coast Guard Auxiliary offer approved courses.

The Richmond Sail and Power Squadron conducts basic boating, charting, and GPS evening courses in early Spring and Fall at several local schools. There is only a minimum charge for materials. The basic course meets the mandatory boating education requirements. For information and course details access [www.usps.org](http://www.usps.org) and link on Boat Smart – Take a Boating Course. Then click on “locate a course near you”. Let’s all practice safe boating on the James River through education.

# Fall Fishing Forecast

By Capt. Mike Ostrander, JRAC Member

The fall fishing forecast for the James River looks promising. As the air temps and water temps of summer begin to cool, look for fish of all sizes to start their fall feed in preparation of their slowed wintertime metabolism. Fishing the James River in October, November and December is far better than most people realize.

Angling Excurions on the James River is incredible right now (I have confidence in that fact no matter when the newsletter comes out!). But, it's fishing of another kind on the James that I'd like to share with you. This fishing I'm talking about is sight fishing or fish watching. As a fishing guide, I love to help people catch fish, but finding fish, and pointing them out as they swim in their natural surroundings is a pretty neat thing.

Within a mile of Pony Pasture, both upstream and downstream, when the water is clear, if you put yourself in the right position, you can see any of the following: bass, gar, catfish, sunfish, bluegill, carp, gizzard shad, suckers of all types, minnows, crayfish, aquatic vegetation, and even an American eel or two.

We know how great the wildlife watching is above the waterline, but don a pair of polarized sunglasses, to take the glare off of the water's surface, and that's when the fish get to hook you. A simple walk down Riverside Drive, a canoe trip, a wade trip, or even a walk across the Nickel Bridge will prove that point. Good luck and Happy Fish Watching!



## What is a Head Race?

The sport of rowing features Head Races each Fall, which are typically winding river races of about three miles. Unlike regattas held in the spring, head races do not have crews start at the same time, then race to be first over the finish line. Instead, boats start at intervals and are timed for shortest completion times. The photo above is not a head race, but the beginning of a float fishing trip on the James River. Look for more information on Head Races in the next issue!



# Diapers in the River

By Anne Wright, JRAC Member

Have you ever been swimming or fishing below dirty diapers left in the river? If you have enjoyed recreational activities this summer at Pony Pasture or near JRP Park Headquarters at Reedy Creek, chances are you have. In mid August, two afternoon visits to these areas yielded a total of five diapers, several containing feces, left open-faced on rocks in mid river. An e-mail to the Friends of James River Park board describing these findings unleashed a deluge of responses about diapers, panty liners and trash routinely found by board members who frequent the park. Board member Betsy Slade says that in the Pony Pasture area she almost daily picks up diapers left in the river and stuffed into rock crevices and tree holes along the shoreline. This represents a very real health risk as well as being just plain gross.

The Friends of James River Park and the park staff have taken immediate action to address and educate all park users about this problem. A large sign has been printed and posted at Pony Pasture in both English and Spanish addressing the issue of diaper disposal and bathing children in diapers in the river.



Friends of James River Park comfort station

The Friends of James River Park sponsors a comfort station during the summer months at Pony Pasture. It provides free ice water, sunscreen, bug spray, trash bags, and information on rules for the responsible enjoyment and use of our waters. Volunteers are needed, so please sign up to help educate and support visitors in the proper stewardship of our river. Spanish speaking volunteers are particularly encouraged to join the Friends of James River Park. Contact the Friend's outreach coordinator, John Johnson at [John.Johnson.ctr@dla.mil](mailto:John.Johnson.ctr@dla.mil)

## Friends of James River Park

P.O. Box 4453

Richmond, Virginia 23220-4453

[fojrp@mindspring.com](mailto:fojrp@mindspring.com)

[www.jamesriverpark.org/friends.htm](http://www.jamesriverpark.org/friends.htm)



Newly posted diaper sign in Pony Pasture

## Articles for James River Reach

Articles for JRAC's next newsletter are due by March 1, 2008. This means ... what you are planning next summer and fall are what we are looking for. Use this newsletter as an avenue to share your future plans and ideas.

[email mike@jamesriverfishing.com](mailto:mike@jamesriverfishing.com)



# Maymont Mini-Camp



## ANIMALS WE LOVE TO HATE

**Saturday, October 27, 1PM, Nature Center**

Children ages 5-8 are invited to Maymont for Halloween fun. Discover animals everyone loves to hate at Halloween time. Are there vampire bats in Virginia? How do Madagascar cockroaches hiss? Do snakes blink? Kids investigate bugs, snakes & bats and find out answers to these questions about our often misunderstood animals. Children will then take an autumn hike and visit with one of Maymont's owls. Cost of the program includes a Maymont t-shirt featuring some of our creepy critters. \$24 per child. Registration required by October 17; call 804-358-7166, ext. 324.

## MAYMONT'S BOO AT THE BARN

**Saturday, October 27th, 12-5pm, Maymont Children's Farm**

Sponsored by Centex Homes

Little ghouls and goblins will have a howling good time at this safe and fun Halloween event. Spooky storytelling, games, a "monster maze," creepy corral and hay wagon rides will introduce children to favorite Halloween traditions. Kids can also compete in a costume contest and enjoy special entertainment. Fees vary for activities and proceeds benefit Maymont's Adopt A-Living-Thing program.

## MAYMONT NATURE CENTER DOCENT TRAINING

**Saturdays at 9:30am, three-session program beginning November 3, at the Nature Center**

Interested in volunteering your time in a fun and exciting place? Sign up for the Maymont Nature Center's docent training course now, and before you know it, you'll be helping Maymont take care of its animals and helping visitors make a connection to the natural world. The two-hour course is offered on three consecutive Saturdays. Docents will receive hands-on training, guided tours, a manual and upon graduation, a special docent polo shirt. \$15 fee for registration and materials. Registration required by October 31; call 804-358-7166, ext. 325.

## Note from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We are excited to bring you the latest edition of James River Reach, the first edition in quite some time.

Thanks to Capt. Mike Ostrander of the James River Fishing School and Sue Cecil, James River Reach is, once again, on line to be published twice a year. With Mike's leadership and the support of the many dedicated JRAC members who contribute story ideas and content, we look forward to information-packed editions in the future.

Soon, the leaves along the James will turn to the brilliant colors of fall, a reminder that the James River Parade of Lights is just around the corner. Last year, more than 20 boats participated, and we're hoping to add a few more to this year's lineup on December 8. So, if you're a boater, or know someone who is, save the date and decorate your boat. This year's theme is "Reflections on the James."

To help celebrate America's 400th Anniversary, JRAC held several commemorative events, including an Independence Boat Parade in July and History Tours on the river throughout the summer.

Though those events have passed, there still is much planning and preparation to be done for next year's James River Days events. The deadline to submit program information to be included in the James River Days brochure and on JRAC's Web site, jamesriveradvisory-council.com, is Friday, Dec. 14.

Thanks to everyone for making 2007 a bright and successful year for JRAC.

**-Kimberly Conley  
Executive Director**

# **JRAC**

## **Committee Contacts**

### **Co-chairman**

Ralph Hambrick  
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### **Co-chairman**

James Donati  
[varina@co.henrico.va.us](mailto:varina@co.henrico.va.us)

### **Executive Director**

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### **Activities Committee Chairman**

Michael Golden  
[goldenm@chesterfield.gov](mailto:goldenm@chesterfield.gov)

### **Issues Committee Chairman**

Vacant

### **Media Committee Chairman**

Dave Goode  
[gooded@chesterfield.gov](mailto:gooded@chesterfield.gov)

### **Newsletter Committee Chairman**

Mike Ostrander  
[mike@jamesriverfishing.com](mailto:mike@jamesriverfishing.com)

### **Administration and Finances Committee Chairman**

Carson Tucker

## **Preserving the James River**

The James River Advisory Council (formerly the James River Task Force) serves as a forum for the diverse interests along the James River in Central Virginia and communicates with public officials regarding issues and challenges facing the river and its resources. The Advisory Council's vision is to unite the community by supporting and promoting the James River as a common resource and preserving its health.

In March 1993, a resolution was adopted at the first Regional Summit by area localities, to create the James River Task Force to study the development of the James River as a regional tourist attraction. In May 1999, the Task Force transitioned to the James River Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council's vision is to unite the community by supporting and promoting the James River as a common resource and preserving its health, beauty, heritage, economic vitality and recreational value.

The Advisory Council has a membership of over sixty members with representatives from eight local jurisdictions -- including the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent and Powhatan and the city of Richmond -- local businesses and industries, civic organizations and citizens. The Advisory Council leads regional river groups and sets the tone for positive and interactive relationships among various organizations.

The James River Advisory Council sponsors the James River Parade of Lights in December, James River Days during the summer, and the James River Regional Clean Up in June. The co-chairs of the council are Jim Donati from Henrico County Board of Supervisors representing the Varina District and Ralph Hambrick from Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory and Southampton Citizens Association.